The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives fair, accurate and editorial service to all members of labor unions and to the friends, readers and patrons of labor, and considers this information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WHOLE NO. 1581 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, JULY 29, 1941 | GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 31, NO. 30

FACING *the* FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

If there is one thing the Communists lack it's a sense of humor. They're so deadly serious all the time that they provoke a comic as well as an indignant reaction.

All of which is by way of explaining our present hilarity over the latest bits of undercover Communist propaganda which has come to our attention. We were burned up at first. But then, we got to thinking it over, the ridiculousness of the whole thing hit us and we're still chuckling.

It seems that the Communists have now discovered that Edwin E. Smith, member of the National Labor Relations Board, is a "real guy" and "honest as they come" and should be reappointed when his term expires on Aug. 27.

We have this startling information on authority of Federated Press, one of the slickest transmission belts for Communist propaganda ever set up. This organization, masking as a labor news service, was exposed years ago by the American Federation of Labor as a Communist propaganda agency. It is still living up to its old standards.

Henry Zon, an obscure fellow-traveler who serves as Washington correspondent for Federated Press, writes about Edwin S. Smith in the July 25 issue of the propaganda service.

Tool of the Communists

"A number of labor and other organizations," says Mr. Zon, "are preparing to go into battle on his behalf. Labor smarter than one (battle) hardly and with full knowledge that it battles for one of its true friends."

Well, if that isn't a laugh, we give up. If that isn't a dead give-away, there never was one. "A number of labor and other organizations," says Mr. Zon. What labor organizations outside of the Communist-dominated CIO, we ask? And we also want to inquire, what are the "other organizations"? Is the Communist Party included among them?

It should be, if it isn't. Mr. Edwin S. Smith has been a faithful tool of the Communists. While on the payroll of Uncle Sam, he went to Mexico City a few years ago with John L. Lewis and was hailed as a first class fellow-traveler by Tchakhotin, the Mexican Red leader, in a bull ring festooned with Red flags.

In every decision he has assisted in rendering as a member of the National Labor Relations Board, Mr. Smith has lent aid and comfort to the Communists. The peak point of his career was the decision turning over hundreds of faithful American Federation of Labor workers to the tender mercies of Harry Bridges in the notorious West Coast Longshoremen's case, which has since been reversed by the NLRB over Mr. Smith's vehement objections.

In his recent public speeches, Mr. Smith has been even more direct and frank. He has protested discrimination against Communists in national defense plants and he has upheld Communist strikes in key plants.

Headed for Defeat

Fortunately for the nation, Mr. Smith and his views no longer control the National Labor Relations Board. There was a time, however, when he was the fair-haired boy. That was when J. Warren Madden and the other Smith boys, whose front hands we've already forgotten, served with him. They almost succeeded in killing all respect for the National Labor Relations Act with their tortured and unfair administration of the law.

Since then, however, the efforts of the American Federation of Labor for a housecleaning of the Board have borne fruit. Madden and the other Smith have been displaced and the changes have resulted healthy and constructive. Now it is the turn of Edwin S. Smith. His term expires on Aug. 27. Despite the efforts of the Communist Party and the CIO, we wouldn't predict that on Aug. 28 Edwin S. Smith will be in the ashcan. There is not the faintest possibility of his reappointment.

A word, in conclusion, about Federated Press. This should be of particular interest to the labor Press loyal to the American Federation of Labor. We know, because its representatives have tried to tell us so, that Federated Press claims to be impartial as between the A. F. of L. and the CIO. We know from reading the propaganda issued by Federated Press that it is completely biased and inimical to the A.F. of L. We could give a hundred instances of this kind. We could show, from articles about the Federated Press tries in every way, even by stretching the truth, to embarrass the American Federation of Labor and promote the interests of the CIO at all times. And, no wonder! Its staff is honeycombed with Reds and fellow-travelers. One of its chief executives, Carl Haessler, is on the payroll of the CIO Auto Workers Union on the side. Enough said.

Altmeyer Urges Eight-Point Program For Broadening Social Security Act

Washington, D. C.—An eight-point program for liberalizing the social security act to provide for health insurance and to abandon the 50-50 matching of federal and state funds was recommended by Chairman Arthur J. Altmeyer, of the Social Security Board.

Asserting that the national defense program has created many new problems of insecurity, Mr. Altmeyer told a House committee studying workers migrating to war areas that "we cannot now than ever" to make progress in social security.

Mr. Altmeyer said that when the defense program arose some said there was no need for further advancement of social gains. Then he remarked that under similar circumstances Great Britain had broadened and extended its social security program and added: "That is what Britain is doing now when Britain was up against bombs.

"We have made a good beginning in our social security program but that is not enough. We still do not have any social insurance system covering the risk to ill health. The method of social insurance can be applied to the problems of ill health just as it already has been applied in the case of unemployment, old age and death."

Recalling that some persons had expressed concern that health security might lead to "socialized medicine," Mr. Altmeyer said:

"'Socialized medicine' is something to which I am opposed if that phrase means a system which destroys the personal relationship between the patient and his doctor. . . . The present trouble about free choice of doctor is that so many people have neither a choice nor a doctor."

He said that the present plan of having the Federal government match state contributions for public assistance had worked a hardship on some of the less wealthy states. He proposed that the present 50-50 federal expenditures in each state which the Federal government bears should vary according to the state's "financial capacity."

The board would use Commerce Department figures of per capita incoms as a basis for computing Federal contributions. Under this plan he told newspaper men that such a scheme might conceivably permit the Federal government to contribute $2,000,000 and a state $1,000,000. Under the existing plan each would contribute $1,000,000.

"Such a change," he said, "would do much to aid the poorer states and to encourage more adequate benefits to a larger number of needy people, particularly if continued migration of younger and more productive workers in response to defense employment opportunities does not end by reducing the base of tax support for matching grants in the poorer agricultural states."

The six other recommendations Mr. Altmeyer made:

Application of unemployment insurance to maritime workers and employes of small firms.

Special treatment for workers who temporarily leave employment covered by the insurance system, although Federal civil service jobs and lose their insurance credits.

Payments to individuals who become permanently and totally disabled.

Extension of social insurance to agricultural workers.

Liberalization of residence requirements for public assistance.

A system of Federal grants, to be matched by states, for general public assistance.

Rail Employes and Survivors Paid $430,000,000 Pensions In Five Years

Washington, D. C.—The report of the Railroad Retirement Board for the fiscal year 1941 reveals that benefits amounting to more than $430,000,000 were certified by the Board to the five-year period ending June 30, 1941.

In the latest year 1940-41, benefits totaled $121,790,776, 6.8 per cent more than in the preceding fiscal year. An estimated $6,000,000 will be added to the total retirement obligations of the Board, as of June 30, 1941, when all applications for annuities to begin before that date are certified.

By June 30, 1941, 144,697 employes had received annuities under the Railroad Retirement Act. In addition, 43,536 former carrier pensioners, 1,241 survivor annuitants, 4,390 death benefit annuitants, 1,241 recipients of both survivor and death benefit annuities, and 2,814 temporary death beneficiaries had received benefits under the act.

Employee annuity payments certified during the fiscal year 1941 totaled $94,300,000, or 11.6 per cent more than in the preceding year. The total number of annuities in force increased from 136,978 at the beginning of the fiscal year to 118,538 annuities at the end of the fiscal year. The average annuities in force as of June 30, 1941, was $65.70.

Administrative expenses of the retirement system totaled $2,913,782 for 1940-41. This was 2.4 per cent of benefit payments as against 2.5 per cent for the preceding benefit year.

AFL Maps Vast Organizing Drive; Workers Urged To Avoid Strikes

More Than 200 Organizers Meet in Washington For Opening Session

Washington, D. C.—The American Federation of Labor has launched a new, nationwide organizing campaign.

More than 200 organizers from every part of the country met in the American Federation of Labor Building in Washington for the drive which will seek to unionize unorganized workers in all industries. Among the fields where special efforts will be directed are aviation, shipyards, chemical plants, rubber and textiles.

At the opening of the two-day session, President William Green in a keynote address urged the cooperation of labor cooperation with the Government in maintaining uninterrupted production in defense industries. He declared that it is the policy of the American Federation of Labor that strikes must be avoided at all costs.

Secretary-Treasurer George Meany also told the organizers that in building new unions they must teach new members discipline and employ negotiation, conciliation and mediation before taking strike action. He explained how Federal agencies such as the National Labor Relations Board and the National Defense Mediation Board can help to avoid strikes.

Frank Fenton, A. F. of L. Organization Director, emphasized the need for co-ordinating the organization drive with the efforts of more than 2,000 organizers employed by national and international unions. He also pledged that the central labor unions in each of the large cities would aid in the organizing drive.

The balance of the first session was devoted to reports from the organizers on the progress of organizing work in their districts. Substantial gains of new members were reported from every section. The total A. F. of L. membership is now at the highest point in its history.

T. A. Rickert Dies Suddenly at Home; Leader Mourned by Organized Labor

New York, N. Y.—Thomas A. Rickert, international president of the United Garment Workers of America for the past thirty-seven years and a member of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor since 1919, died suddenly at his home here July 28. He was 65 years old.

Mr. Rickert suffered a heart attack and died soon afterward. He had spent the day at his desk at the union's headquarters and showed no signs of illness. News of his death came as a shock to the entire labor movement.

Born in Chicago on April 24, 1876, Thomas A. Rickert was educated in the public schools and went to work in his early teens. He became actively identified with the labor movement when only 19 and at the age of 23, having demonstrated the qualities of labor leadership, he was chosen president of the United Garment Workers.

Mr. Rickert was highly regarded by Samuel Gompers and at the Denver convention of 1921 the revered founder of the A.F. of L. rose for the first time in his long career to nominate a candidate for a place on the Executive Council.

"There is no one more ready with sound judgment or suggestions than Tom Rickert," Gompers declared.

At his death Mr. Rickert was Second Vice-President of the A.F. of L.

During the World War he served as a member of the War Labor Board and was also a member of the Industrial Conference called by President Wilson in October, 1919.

President William Green, Secretary-Treasurer George Meany and the members of the Executive Council paid tribute to Mr. Rickert's devotion to the cause of trade unionism and to the contributions which he had made to the deliberations of the Council and to the entire movement.

The body was to lie in state at the Cashpbell Funeral Home in New York until July 31 and then to be taken by train to Chicago for interment.

Closed Shop, Pay Raise, Awarded To AFL Chemical Union by NDMB

Washington, D. C.—The National Defense Mediation Board made public its recommendation that the Western Cartridge Company of East Alton, Ill., require continued membership in the Federal Labor Union 18384, A. F. L. as a condition of employment for 550 workers in its smokeless powder division.

The recommendation for "a maintenance of membership" clause in the Western Cartridge Company case was by unanimous vote of a panel consisting of Thomas R. Wyzanski, Jr., representing the public; Roger D. Lapham, representing employers, and Edward J. Brown, representing employes. Mr. Lapham said in a separate statement that he believed that "unless parties voluntarily agree to such a clause, the board ought ordinarily not to recommend it."

In the Western Cartridge case, classed as one of the most difficult to come before the board, the panel made it plain that its recommendation that the union should receive a security clause was predicated on the company's attitude during the negotiations before the board.

"In the hearings before this board, the company showed what at best must be described as a complete unfamiliarity with the realities of collective bargaining," the board panel said. "Either by accident or by design, it engaged in numerous unfair practices which undermined the confidence of others sitting at the same table with them.

"If the management's tactics were not deliberately dilatory they at any rate gave that impression. A workman might reasonably conclude that the companies did not want and were going to try to eliminate the union's members. Against this fear, based upon the recent record, the union members, we believe, entitled in this case to be protected."

Noting that the Western Cartridge Company had recently granted a 5 per cent wage increase to all workers except those represented by the A. F. of L. union, the Mediation Board recommended that the company immediately grant a 5 per cent wage increase to all smokeless powder division workers, and that demands of the union for greater increases should be submitted to arbitration.

Rep. Weiss Blames Unfair Employers For Strikes In Defense Program

Washington, D. C.—If employers obeyed the laws of the land and sat down at the conference table with representatives of the workers, there would be no strikes in the United States, Congressman Samuel A. Weiss (Dem., Pa.), declared.

He denounced Congressmen who spend their time smearing labor and declared that they are misplaced.

"Each day sees new proposals to take away the right to strike, or to curb the right so severely that its value to workers will be destroyed," he declared.

"Most of the schemes originate among Congressmen from poll tax states who have few industries in their districts and know little about the problems of working men.

"The right to strike is basic to all workers' rights and to all liberty in the United States. It should be clear that, if our defense program is to defend democracy, then every act which strengthens democracy is an integral part of our defense program."

$400,000 PAY BOOST WON BY ELECTRICAL WORKERS

Philadelphia, Pa.—A 20-week strike by Local 101 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, AFL affiliate, against the Progress Manufacturing Company, producing electrical supplies, was ended with an agreement carrying pay increases for the 450 employes and provision for the union label on all of the company's products. Robert Moody, business agent of the local, said the wage increases during the 21 months of the contract would aggregate $400,000.

News Briefs

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETS IN CHICAGO ON AUG. 4

Chicago, Ill.—The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, which opens its summer meeting here on Aug. 4, will devote its session primarily to the formulation of policies to aid and promote the national defense program.

At this meeting, the Council will draw up its report and recommendations to the forthcoming annual convention of the A.F. of L., which will be held in Seattle, Wash., beginning Oct. 6.

The Council came to Chicago for its meeting for the first time in many years to join in the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the first local union of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners in this city.

MACHINISTS' MEMBERSHIP NOW AT RECORD HEIGHT

Washington, D. C.—All past records for membership gains are being smashed by the International Association of Machinists, Secretary-Treasurer Emmett C. Davison revealed this week.

"Our rolls are growing at the rate of 1,000 a week, faster than we can keep up with them," Davison declared. "We have hit the 278,000 mark in membership, triple our low point at the bottom of the depression."

Most of the advances are being made in private industry, as well as all other industries, as well, members are signing up in the union at a record pace, Davison said.

Wage increases are also being won at precedent-smashing pace by the union.

OREGON LABOR URGES FEDERAL POWER PLANT

Astoria, Ore.—The annual convention of the Oregon State Federation of Labor went on record favoring placing a Columbia Valley Authority patterned after the Tennessee Valley Authority.

MARYLAND PAYROLLS CLIMB UPWARDS

Baltimore, Md.—Maryland pay rolls and employment continued to rise during June, completing the first half-year in more than a decade in which both employment and pay rolls have increased every month for the period, John M. Pohlhaus, State Labor Commissioner, said.

Employment increased 2.4 per cent over May, and combined weekly pay rolls were up 2.5 per cent, Pohlhaus said.

Both increases were contra-seasonal, he added. The average increase during the past eighteen years being a decrease of one per cent in employment and a similar drop in pay rolls from May to June.

WAGE INCREASES WON BY AFL AUTO WORKERS

Ypsilanti, Mich.—Local Union No. 674 and Local Union No. 1005 of the American, AFL affiliate, gained an exclusive bargaining contract with the Standard Sanitary Manufacturing Company providing for a general wage increase of 10 cents per hour to all hourly employes and an increase of five cents per hour for all employes on the bonus system, with the provision that negotiations are to be entered immediately to revise the present bonus system which will result in added compensation to this group of workers.

ARMORED CAR CHAUFFEURS AWARDED HIGHER WAGES

New York, N. Y.—Weekly wage increases of $2 to chauffeurs and guards were granted to 2,000 armored car trucks and $1.88 a week to those on a 40-hour week were granted in an award by Dr. Harry Shulman, arbitrator of the New York trucking industry.

The award affects members of the Armored Car Chauffeurs and Guards Union, International Brotherhood Brotherhood of Teamsters and Chauffeurs, A. F. of L. affiliate, who are employed by armored car companies including Company, Brinks, Inc., Wells-Fargo and the Cross Armored Transportation Company.

MILWAUKEE CITY WORKERS ASK HIGHER WAGE SCALE

Milwaukee, Wis.—Milwaukee City Employes local union No. 2 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employes, AFL affiliate, requested Mayor Zeidler for wage increases totaling $15 a month per man for approximately 650 city laborers. The union also requested that many classifications be merged into one.

Clyde Follansbee, president of the union, said the present monthly wages of $106, $115 and $130 are examples of the system of inequitable wages. Frequently because of seasonal and vocational shifts, he explained, the lower paid men are required to do the work of those drawing higher pay.

Building Trades Sign Epochal Pact With Government, Banning Strikes

WPA Workers and CIO Eliminated From All Defense Construction Projects In New Agreement

Washington, D. C.—An epochal pact between the Building and Construction Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor and five Government agencies, which bans strikes on all defense construction projects, has been negotiated, signed and ratified.

President Roosevelt at a press conference expressed his deep gratification with the agreement which covers the duration of the defense emergency.

Sidney Hillman Associate Director of the Office of Production Management, thanked the presidents of the nineteen unions affiliated with the Building and Construction Trades Department for their aid in bringing about the agreement. He said:

"Without their experience, patience and vision, no such agreement could have been worked out with the dispatch required by our defense effort."

The pact covers 1,500,000 building trades workers affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, more than half of whom are now engaged on defense projects.

It was signed by the heads of the following Federal agencies: The War Department, the Navy Department, the Office of Production Management, the Maritime Commission and the Federal Works Agency.

The main feature of the agreement is a clause which provides that "there shall be no stoppage of work on account of jurisdictional disputes or otherwise. All grievances and disputes shall be settled by conciliation and arbitration."

Other outstanding provisions of the pact include:

1—Elimination of all WPA workers from construction jobs on which members of A. F. of L. unions are employed.

2—In pre-determining the minimum wage, consideration shall be given to wages prevailing in the area from which labor must be drawn to the job and to new wage rates which have been negotiated and concluded through bona fide collective bargaining processes which will take effect during the period.

3—Establishment of uniform overtime rates at time-and-a-half for all work in excess of eight hours in any one day, together with the establishment of uniform shifts.

4—Creation of a Board of Review, consisting of a representative of the contracting agencies, a representative of the Building and Construction Trades Department and a representative of OPM to mediate and adjust all disputes.

Other provisions of the agreement related to subcontracting and apprenticeship training.

The agreement effectively bars the CIO paper union, known as the United Construction Workers, from the field of defense construction and gives the Building and Construction Trades Department a virtual closed shop in this field.

The press and the public hailed the new agreement generally as aid to labor peace and a boon to the Government's defense program.

John P. Coyne, President, and Herbert Rivers, Secretary-Treasurer, of the Building and Construction Trades Department, played leading roles in negotiating the stabilization agreement.

LABOR VICTORY WON IN CONGRESS

House Rejects Conference Report Opposed by Green

Washington, D. C.—Another great labor victory was won in Congress when the House of Representatives voted 255 to 114 to reject the conference committee report on the Connally-May Bill. The House instructed its conferees to stand pat on the House action which removed all anti-labor provisions from the bill.

President William Green of the American Federation of Labor led the fight against the conference committee's report which retained some of the objectionable features of the original Connally Bill. In a letter to all members of Congress, Mr. Green summed up the reasons for labor's opposition to the so-called compromise adopted by the conference committee as follows:

"First, the Conference Committee's report strikes at the very vital and fundamental American principle of private ownership. The right to own and manage property is a fundamental American right. Said right should not be interfered with or impaired, except by due process of law the very life of the Nation may be at stake in the balance date.

"Secondly, the Conference Committee's report, if adopted, would impose conditions of involuntary servitude upon Labor. Such legislation would be in direct contradiction to Article Thirteen of the Constitution of the United States, which provides that 'neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction. Congress shall have power to enforce this article with appropriate legislation.'

"Unscrupulous employers would be encouraged under the provisions of the Conference Committee's report, if adopted by Congress, to exploit Labor to the limit. They would take advantage of the threat of Compulsory labor in industry, to compel Labor to work under oppressive conditions and to impose arbitrary conditions of employment. We vigorously protest against the creation of such a situation.

"I assert with all the power at my command that Labor is giving to the Nation its highest type of service, and in doing so is inspired by a spirit of loyalty and devotion to the government and to its announced policies.

"Defense production is practically every line of activity is ahead of schedule. The fine degree of cooperation which is in evidence on every hand ought to be encouraged, rather than discouraged, through the enactment of repressive legislation, such as is embodied in the Conference Committee's report.

"Voluntary service, which is inspired by the spirit of understanding and friendliness, will produce better results than compulsory legislation, or the application of forceful methods.

"An appeal to the heart and conscience of Labor, and the management of industry for genuine cooperation and the highest type of defense production results. All men will give willingly and in full measure, but those who would give service of a different kind will resent any such force.

"I earnestly request the members of Congress to reject the Conference Committee's report on S. 1324 which amends the Selective Service Act."

Campaign To Aid British Labor Stimulated by National Week

New York, N. Y.—Greatly stimulated by the nationwide observance of Aid British Labor Week, which ended last week, the drive to help British workers forcefully to the attention of the American public, the drive of the American Labor Committee to Aid British Labor has swung into its many local areas, and with contributions, pledges and encouraging reports pouring in from all sections of the country.

Eager to make its first substantial contribution to the British Trades Union Congress at the earliest possible opportunity, the committee is appealing to all Aid British Labor Committees, state and city central labor bodies, and international and local unions to send in at once whatever funds they have collected to date. This will also enable the committee to report evidence of activity by communities when it makes its first comprehensive report.

"We have refrained from setting quotas or standards, since the campaign is being conducted purely on a voluntary basis," Matthew Woll, chairman of the committee, said.

Committees which have not yet reported any estimates are being urged to do so by the national committee. The campaign has now progressed to the point where they are able to do so, according to Mr. Woll, the following committees established their own quotas which were offered to all committees, and which are listed below as possible guides for their own estimates. Some of the goals are as follows: New Jersey, $100,000; New Orleans, La., $25,000; Shreveport, La., $25,000; Tennessee, $50,000; Newport, R. I., $15,000; Georgia, $12,000; Houston, Texas, $16,000; Kansas City, Mo., $8,000; Dallas, Texas, $4,000; Fort Worth, Texas, $3,000, and El Paso, Texas, $1,500; Toledo, Ohio, $2,000.